

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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CHAPTER VIII.

MORE than a month lay between the afternoon when Tyrrell made the acquaintance of Selma's future husband and the August evening, about a week after Jim's accident, when she had flung herself into Helen's arms, and, sobbing out an incoherent rhapsody of love and joy, had told her that she had promised to be Roger Cornish's wife. And that the spectacle of Selma in love was still an astounding one to her cousins was certainly no fault of Selma's.

During the week that passed between Jim's accident and the engagement, nobody could have failed to see what was coming; the only conjecture left to the excited conclaves who incessantly discussed the situation below their breaths, in all sorts of odd corners, was when it would "happen." The whole party had looked on—the majority suffering acutely from the necessity of repressing in public their almost irrepressible amusement and astonishment—at the sight of Selma as simply and hopelessly in love as a girl could be, restless or dreamy when he was absent, silent when he was present, blushing when he spoke to her, following him furtively with large, shy eyes, starting and trembling at the sound of his voice or his step, and generally conducting herself in the most orthodox and conventional manner. And the question finally asked and answered—how girlishly and sweetly no one but

Roger ever knew—her love was as unreserved as her perfect happiness, and as demonstrative. Jim had given it as his deliberate conviction that they were the "spooniest spoons going." Sylvia, Helen, and Nettie confided to one another that Selma never spoke or thought of any one but Roger. Her sister was less astonished than the other girls. Partly because she was herself engaged, and partly because, as she said, she had learnt never to be surprised at Selma, Helen took it altogether as a matter of course, and responded placidly to Mrs. Cornish, when that lady spent long mornings, in the absence of the engaged couple, in monologues of satisfaction. In her aunt's eyes Selma had at last become a satisfactory and understandable girl, and all her past incomprehensibility was forgiven and forgotten.

It was curious, but perhaps inevitable, that all the surprise of the Cornish family was concentrated on the fact that Selma should have fallen in love. They had never understood her artistic aspirations; her old scheme of life had been vague and unreal to them every one—with the exception of Humphrey, and Humphrey looked on with quiet, thoughtful eyes, and expressed no opinion—and they hardly realised what it meant that these had died suddenly and completely out of her heart. Every thought, every instinct she had known since thought or instinct had first stirred in her, was dominated and nullified by a new emotion. She had looked upon the stage as the means by which she was to devote herself to her ideal; now she thought of the stage no more. She had looked upon John Tyrrell as the arbitrator of her life; she only hoped vaguely now that he would not think her ungrateful. She had in her the fire of genius; it was quenched in a

spring tide of love. Her life was centred in one idea, and that idea was Roger.

Helen and Selma had come back to London to the Cornishes' house, not to their own. Mrs. Cornish had taken it for granted that it should be so, and neither girl had made any objection. Roger was trying to make arrangements which would enable him to settle in London; it was likely that he and Selma would be married immediately, and, until their plans were settled, it was useless to make any arrangements for the future.

It was fortunate that the interest which surrounded Selma as an engaged young lady did not wear off, and it was also fortunate that Humphrey and Helen were a most unexacting couple, since, as Jim expressed it, "Roger had nothing to do in London but spoon Selma; and Selma was always ready to be spooned." Jim himself had confided to Nettie, on going back to school, that he was in consequence "jolly glad to get out of the house"; but his sisters, fortunately, continued to be thrilled with excitement over the precaution necessary on entering any room where the lovers were suspected to be, over Selma's absent-mindedness and Roger's inattention, and their mutual oblivion of everything in the world but one another; and when, a few days after Tyrrell's call, Roger was obliged to go to Liverpool on business, all the resources of every member of the family were taxed to the utmost for Selma's consolation.

The week of his absence was almost gone; it was Friday morning, and on Saturday he was expected home, and Selma was moving about the morning-room, restless and excited, radiant with expectation. Sylvia was painting at a table near the window. Mrs. Cornish and Helen were working.

"My dear, don't you think the time would seem shorter if you did a little work?" suggested Mrs. Cornish, laughing, as Selma turned with a heavy sigh from a passing inspection of the clock.

"Do you think it would, auntie?" replied Selma, coming across the room, and kneeling aimlessly down in front of Mrs. Cornish, and smiling up at her with a frank impatience in her eyes which made her look like a little child. "There's all the morning, and all the afternoon, and all the evening, and——"

"I think I'd better take you to the Marriotts' to-night instead of Helen!"

Mrs. Cornish's voice was laughing; but

Helen took up her words eagerly, and said:

"Oh, auntie, what a good idea; I don't care about it a bit, and Selma would like it, wouldn't you, Selma?"

Selma let herself drop into a sitting position on the floor and considered the question.

"Is it a big party?" she asked.

"These parties are always big," put in Sylvia, lifting her head and contemplating her work critically. "He is the richest man on the Bench, father says, and they've a lovely house, and know lots of people. Mother, take Helen and Selma, and let me stop at home. Helen, come and look at this."

Helen put down her work, and rose, as she said:

"Sylvia, really and truly, I'd rather stop at home. It will be a nice quiet evening, you know. Oh, that's lovely."

The meditative figure on the floor, whose eyes had wandered back to the clock, turned at the exclamation.

"Show me," it observed, having apparently passed from a restless to an indolent stage of impatience.

Sylvia handed her the painting as she leant back on one hand, stretching out the other to receive it, and said:

"Will Humphrey be at home?"

"Yes," answered Helen, following the painting, and standing over Selma as she looked down at it.

Selma sighed heavily, and leant her head caressingly back against her sister, looking up at her with great, envious eyes.

"Oh, you happy Helen," she said. "Of course, you don't want to go to any party."

"And that being the case," responded Helen, brightly, "leave me at home, auntie, and take Sylvia and Selma."

"Would you like it, Selma?" asked Mrs. Cornish.

Selma put her head dubiously on one side, and contemplated the painting.

"Sweet, Sylvia!" she said, giving it to Helen to return to her cousin, as she went on, with unconcealed melancholy: "I'm afraid I shouldn't much, auntie. I should be wishing it were over all the time."

Helen and Sylvia laughed simultaneously.

"Oh, cheer up, Selma!" exclaimed the latter, gaily. "The longest lane, you know! You'd much better come, hadn't she, mother? It will help the evening through, at any rate."

Selma showed no desire to have the evening helped through, and for some time she refused to have anything to say to the idea. At last, however, the persuasions of Sylvia and Helen reduced her to saying that she would have gone if she had had a dress; and this excuse being scouted by both the other girls as utterly futile, she finally declared that she didn't care in the least how she dragged through the time, and it was settled for her by her sympathising advisers that she should do it in the vortex of dissipation.

All Selma's movements at this time sent a thrill of excitement through the Cornish household, and she had been out very little with her aunt and cousins. The Marriottes' party became quite an event in the eyes of the whole family as soon as it was known that she was going to it. Her dress was looked out, discussed, and touched up by Helen, with assistance from Sylvia and Nettie, tentative at first, since Selma in evening dress had been an awe-inspiring vision to them not so very long ago, and waxing enthusiastic at her careless, but to them most encouraging gratitude. And when the time came for her to dress, Selma, with one of her sudden changes of mood, seemed to have forgotten all her reluctance to go out, forgotten that she was merely dragging on a miserable existence until Roger should come back. She was in wild spirits, dancing about the room in various stages of undress, each of which seemed to make her more youthful and irresistible than the last, first with Helen, then with Sylvia, who was vainly trying to accomplish her own dressing with all speed, that she might assist in the adorning of her cousin, then with the much-excited Nettie, who was acting lady's-maid to her own intense satisfaction.

"Selma, one would think you'd never been to a party before," cried the latter, as Helen captured the graceful, dancing figure, and seated her by main force in a chair, preparatory to doing her hair for her.

"I never have, Nettie," returned Selma, gaily; "not since I was your age—not properly. I hated parties last spring; oh, you don't know how I hated them, and that's why I shall enjoy myself so to-night."

A chorus of "Selma, what do you mean?" greeted this declaration; and Helen added, peremptorily, "My dear, you really must keep still," to which admonition Selma replied with a kiss,

but which was without further practical result.

"It'll be so different, don't you see," she said. "I shall have nothing to do but enjoy myself, and I shall revel in it. Oh, thanks, Nettie!" as she took her dress from the girl's arm.

There was a few moments' breathless silence on the part of the three ladies'-maids, while Selma kept up a running fire of comments, jokes, and thanks, and then the last touch was given, and Nettie broke out with:

"Oh, Selma, I never saw anything so lovely. Oh, isn't she beautiful!"

The dress was of soft, faint yellow silk, very simply made, with the long draperies which suited Selma's slender gracefulness so well, and the delicate yellow setting from which it rose seemed to give an added loveliness to the lovely, dark head. Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes sparkling, and her lips were curved into a smile. Even Helen, to whom she was always perfection, thought that she had never seen her look sweeter, and she said, tenderly:

"What a pity Roger isn't going!"

The instant she had spoken the words, which had risen instinctively to her lips, she regretted them. The light died out of the beautiful, sensitive face suddenly and completely, the very colour faded, and Selma's lips trembled as she turned away from the glass without another glance.

"It doesn't matter how I look," she said, disconsolately. "I wonder why I'm going!"

She went downstairs sadly and silently, and nothing they could say, none of the admiring comments she received, could win a smile from her. She was depressed in proportion to her previous high spirits, and she moved and spoke when it was necessary, as though her thoughts were far away—as indeed they were—until she was aroused to the consciousness that she was standing in a brilliantly-lighted room, in a brilliantly-dressed crowd, by a man's voice at her elbow.

"How do you do, Mrs. Cornish?" it said. "What have I done that you cut me—Selma?"

She turned with a little cry of pleasure.

"Oh, Mr. Tyrrell," she said, "I never thought of seeing you! How very nice!"

His eyes rested for a moment on her face in its sudden glow of pleased surprise, and he said, rather mechanically:

"I did not know you knew the Marriotts."

"Uncle Dick"—began Selma; and then she broke off with a little laugh, which was more than half vexation. "Old Lady West is bearing down on me," she said, rapidly. "I shall have to talk to her. Oh, do manage to have a little talk to me by-and-by."

His smile of comprehension and assent had something rather strange about it, and he turned quickly, as Selma shook hands with an old lady evidently bent on congratulation, and, finding acquaintances almost at his elbow, was soon drawn on further into the crowd. Quite half the people in the room were known to him; every one who knew him was anxious to speak to him, and every one who spoke to him that night thought that John Tyrrell had come back after his holiday more delightful than ever. He had been talking, smiling, listening for nearly half an hour when Selma found him, it seemed to her by the merest chance, close beside her, as she stood talking to a mutual friend close to the entrance to the conservatory. A few minutes afterwards, the mutual friend, having drawn Tyrrell into the conversation, drifted away, and Selma said, quickly:

"This is delightful! Let us go to the conservatory and talk."

It was still comparatively early in the evening, and the conservatory was nearly empty; it was softly lighted with Japanese lamps, and among the tall palms and wonderful ferns were quaintly-made seats, with richly-coloured cushions. It was a charming picture as they entered, and Selma's graceful figure made it more charming still.

"Why are you not dancing?" Tyrrell asked, as the distant sounds of dance-music reached them as he stood for a moment beside the seat she had taken.

She lifted her eyes to him, and the colour rushed to her cheeks.

"Roger isn't here," she said, softly.

"I see."

Tyrrell had seated himself before he spoke, and there was another instant's pause before he went on, as he leant back in his seat and crossed his legs.

"And why isn't he here?"

"He is away," said Selma, turning her lovely, melancholy face towards him; "he has been away a week. Ah, you don't know how dreadful it has been! But he is coming back to-morrow."

"And when is it to be?"

"When—— Oh!" Selma's colour deepened, and her eyes dropped suddenly. She did not see the look on the face of the man beside her as he watched her, sitting quite motionless, in his easy, graceful attitude. "It—it depends on so many things," she said, after a moment, shyly and confidentially. "You see, Roger doesn't want to take me to New Zealand; he says I shouldn't like it; and there may be a good deal of trouble before he can settle down in London. But there's just a tiny chance that he might be able to arrange something in England at once—something very small, you know; and then—then——"

The sweet, young voice died away, and there was a moment's silence as she sat, a lovely picture of confusion, bending a little forward, playing with her fan as it lay on her knee.

"I see," he said again, mechanically, without moving his eyes.

Selma suddenly clasped her hands softly together, and went on, eagerly:

"You see, it would be a very little house, of course, and we should be rather poor; but we shouldn't mind that, either of us, a bit. That's what I tell him."

She was looking straight before her with earnest, childish eyes, and as she finished, she suddenly turned them upon him. Tyrrell moved slightly, but very suddenly, and his voice, as he spoke, had a new tone in it—the tone of a man who is feeling his way, though he spoke lightly, almost banteringly:

"There will be no more of this kind of thing," he said, with a slight gesture towards the brilliant crowd that passed and re-passed before the entrance to the conservatories. "Ah, there is Lady Dunstan. She asked Sybilla to bring you to her 'at home' next week; but that was in the capacity of young lion, not domestic mouse, of course." He paused, and bowed to the lady in question, and then went on: "This is almost your last appearance, I suppose, even in a private capacity?"

"Yes," she assented, brightly, "I suppose so."

"It seems hardly worth while to have made such a sensation for 'one night only,'" he observed, with a smile—the smile of open admiration and congratulation of an old friend, stretching out his hand for her fan as he spoke, and unfurling it carelessly.

Selma looked at him wonderingly.

"I don't understand," she said.

Tyrrell furled the fan with a swift turn of his wrist—he was one of the best fencers in London—and laughed as he said:

"If any other girl said such a thing as that to me, I should say that she was fishing for compliments, Miss Malet." Then, as she drew back a little, half-wondering, half-hurt, he added, quickly and gently: "Don't you understand that everybody is talking about you, Selma? Half the people in the room have been asking who you are, and I've seen half the people in the room introduced to you."

"Have you?" exclaimed Selma. "Yes, lots of people have been talking to me; but I didn't know you saw me. I thought you had lost sight of me altogether, and I was so afraid we shouldn't meet again."

Tyrrell passed over her words with a slight smile.

"Haven't you enjoyed it?" he asked, lightly. "Are you not the least bit sorry to give it up, to think that you will never set a whole room full of smart people staring and talking again?"

Selma laughed.

"Not the least little bit," she said. "Not the very least little bit."

There was a pause. Two or three couples strolled in from the dancing-room, and Tyrrell furled and unfurled the fan in his hands, gazing at it absently as he did so. Then the dance music began again—a dreamy, alluring waltz, and Selma's feet began to move restlessly. He looked at her and she laughed.

"It's such fascinating music," she said. "It makes one long to dance."

He waited a moment, watching the girlish figure as it swayed slightly in time to the music, then he echoed her laugh, and said:

"There is only one way of taking up such a cue as that. My speech obviously is, 'Miss Malet, may I have the pleasure?'"

"Thank you, Mr. Tyrrell, I am not dancing to-night. That is the end of the scene, isn't it?"

She leant back in her chair with another light laugh, and held out her hand for her fan. But he retained it.

"I mean it," he said. "Would it be treason in you to dance this with such an old friend?"

Selma turned to him as though he had proposed that they should fly to the moon together.

"Dance with you, Mr. Tyrrell!" she exclaimed. "Why, you never dance!"

"That's no reason why I never should," he answered. "Come."

He rose as he spoke, and she followed his example, obeying him as she had obeyed him all her life.

"I've never danced with you in my life," she said. "It seems so funny."

He made her no answer, and she slipped her hand into his arm as he offered it her, and walked away with him. The dancing-room was very full, and as they stood a moment waiting to start, he said, as he looked down on her:

"What a successful frock! Why have I never seen it before?"

Selma smiled.

"You have," she said, "often!"

He put his arm round her, and they glided off into the stream as he replied:

"I don't remember it."

There were only a few turns left before the waltz came to an end, and Tyrrell talked lightly all the time about the party, the people, and anything that they suggested to him. Selma, after the first delight in her partner's perfect movement, gave herself up to wishing that he was Roger. But when it was over and he released her, the tone and manner of his "Thank you!" startled himself as it could not fail to have startled her if her thoughts had not been many miles away. John Tyrrell was not an accomplished actor and a man of the world for nothing, however, and as he took her back into the conservatory, and they walked up and down there while she fanned herself slowly, his voice and expression alike became again the voice and expression with which she was familiar.

"That was delicious," she said, recalling herself with an effort from her thoughts of Roger. "What perfect dance music!"

"It is," he asserted. "Let me fan you!" He took the fan from her in spite of her laughing protest, and began to move it slowly up and down; and then fixing his eyes on her face as his occupation gave him an excuse for doing, he said, carelessly, but with keen attention in his eyes: "Have you heard much music since you came back to town? Have you heard Moritz?"

Moritz was a young pianist who had made his first appearance in the London art world during the last season, and Selma had met him several times, and taken a sympathetic, girlish interest in her fellow débutant.

"No," she answered, eagerly. "What is he doing this season?"

"He is working splendidly," returned Tyrrell. "He seems to me to make a step forward in power and technique every time I hear him." He paused as Selma uttered a little, quick, enthusiastic exclamation of sympathy, and then went on, still with the same intent watch on her face: "Do you remember how angry he used to get with himself over those Volkslieder? I heard him play them the other night to absolute perfection, and I told him so afterwards. He shook back that mane of his, his eyes lighted up—you know—and he said: 'Ah, I have done it! It is my own. I stand now upon his difficulties!'"

"Oh!" exclaimed Selma, "how lovely for him! How he must have worked. Do tell him I congratulate him."

The excited face and shining eyes were turned full towards him, and he studied them as he would have studied an open book, as he said, deliberately and slowly, in a lower tone than he had used yet, as though the subject were painful to him:

"He asked after you, and what you were doing. I told him that you had given up work, and he couldn't believe it. Ah," he added, with quick change of manner, "here is Miss Cornish looking for you, I'm afraid."

He did not look at Selma, but there was an instant's pause before she took her fan as he offered it to her, and he knew that her face had changed suddenly and completely. She hardly spoke as they rejoined Mrs. Cornish, and her face was still dreamy and thoughtful when Tyrrell shut the carriage door on them and turned away.

He went straight home, though it was so early, and had smoked two cigarettes before Miss Tyrrell, who had also been out, came in with an exclamation of surprise at seeing him.

"I told you it would be dull," she said, carelessly, as she unwound an artistically-arranged wrap from her artistically-arranged head. "Who was there?"

"Nobody," returned her brother. "Selma was the sensation."

"Selma Malet! I should not have thought of her being there. And how does the silly child like the idea of giving it up?"

Tyrrell smiled cynically.

"She has no ideas of any kind, at present," he said. "She is in love."

"And will it last?"

Her brother flicked the ashes from the top of his cigarette, and his face was more cynical than ever.

"Who knows!" he said.

CONCERNING CHIVALRY.

CHIVALRY went when the French Revolution broke out, according to Edmund Burke. Never, never more, he said, shall we see "that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom." But was the order of chivalry nothing more than a code of manners? Was it more or less than "that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness"?

The truth is that in these modern times we confuse the Order with the sentiment, and even, as regards the Order, we are too apt to regard it through the satirical spectacles of Cervantes. Yet as Don Quixote is the type of the extravagance, so also is Tennyson's King Arthur the type of the nobility of that "singular institution," as Robertson calls it, in which valour, courtesy, and religion were so strangely blended. Whether the institution of chivalry was the cause or the effect of the improvement in mediæval manners, remains an open question. It has been held, not without reason, that the knightly manners of the Middle Ages were, in a sense, compulsory. That is to say, that the general fierceness and rudeness compelled a counter-agent in the form of artificial gentleness, which found expression in ostentatious benevolence and exaggerated gallantry. In that case, the modern equivalent of mediæval chivalry has at least the superior merit of a natural basis.

Manners make the man in a more complete sense than they ever made the knight; and there are thousands of persons toiling in the dark places of the earth in a glorious, but far more effective, as well as self-sacrificing manner, than the knight-errants of old, who roamed about redressing human wrongs by rough, and far from discriminating, methods.

We all know, of course, the idealised chivalry of the Round Table, that glorious

company which was to serve as model for the mighty world, and be the fair beginning of a time which has never come, even yet.

A perfect knight must be a perfect gentleman—an ideal to which poor Don Quixote more nearly approached than those whose fame he revered. A Book of Chivalry has been described by Mr. A. J. Duffield, the translator of Don Quixote, as a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. But the absurdity of the mediæval romances is not necessarily in the mediæval institution. We must, in short, distinguish between literary chivalry and actual chivalry, although it is as well to remember that, had it not been for those "idiot tales," we should never have been enriched by the immortal history of the Knight of La Mancha.

It is curious, by the way, in recalling the desperate efforts of the Church in the time of Cervantes to counteract the Books of Chivalry, which had taken such hold of the popular mind, to compare the opinion of that famous teacher, and by no means narrow-minded man, Dr. Thomas Arnold. Writing to his friend, the Rev. Julius Hare—see Stanley's "Life"—he said :

"If I were called upon to name what spirit of evil predominantly deserved the name of Antichrist, I should name the spirit of chivalry, the more detestable for the very guise of the archangel ruined, which has made it so seductive to the most generous spirits; but to me so hateful, because it is in direct opposition to the impartial justice of the Gospel, and its comprehensive feelings of equal brotherhood, and because it so fostered a sense of honour rather than a sense of duty."

Yet if honour regulated conduct, how can the spirit of chivalry be "detestable," especially if Dr. Arnold's son were right in teaching that conduct is three-fourths of life? The "singular institution" has suffered on both hands, from indiscriminate blame as well as from indiscriminate praise.

We speak of chivalry as a mediæval institution, and also in connection with King Arthur. But Lingard says that chivalry originated in the eleventh century, and that it was already declining in the fourteenth may be inferred from a curious poem of that date, "The Tournament of Tottenham," in which chivalry is satirised. This agrees with Guizot, who, in his "History of Civilisation," places the real

time of chivalry in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, and its full decay in the fourteenth.

Authorities differ both as to the cause of decline and the date of death. Burke, as we have seen, assumes that it lived up to the French Revolution; Buckle says it was destroyed by Puritanism; Chævenix says it was killed by the progress of military arts; Mill's "History of Chivalry" says it was Frederic the Third of Germany who dealt it the first blow, by permitting common citizens to receive knighthood.

Carlyle apparently ascribes the decay of chivalry to the schoolmaster and the craftsman. "That tuneful chivalry, that high, cheerful devotion to the God-like in heaven, and to women, its emblems on earth; those crusades and vernal love-songs were the heroic doings of the world's youth, to which also a corresponding manhood succeeded. Poetic recognition is followed by scientific examination; the reign of Fancy, with its gay images, and graceful, capricious sports, has ended; and now Understanding, which, when reunited to poetry, will one day become Reason and a nobler Poetry, has to do its part. Meantime, while there is no such union, but a more and more widening controversy, prosaic discord, and the immusical sounds of labour and effort are alone audible."

Wherein it will be seen that Carlyle had a higher appreciation of mediæval chivalry than John Richard Green, who ridicules its picturesque mimicry of high sentiment, heroism, love, and courtesy—a mimicry before which all depth and reality of nobleness disappeared.

Some people have tried to find the prototype of the knight of chivalry in the knight, or eque, of Rome. But there was little similarity, and especially in the days of Imperial Rome was the position of woman much inferior to that assigned her in the Middle Ages. Moreover, the Roman eque had certain civil as well as military functions to perform, was stern and forbidding in his attitude, and was by no means fond of adventure for its own sake. The knight of chivalry existed by and for adventure, had no practical business, and lived in an atmosphere of sentiment and song. Perhaps he owes a great deal more to the Troubadours than to his own merit and prowess.

As Caxton, our first printer, was the first to publish a book about chivalry, it is natural to turn to him for some light on

its origin. In brief, it was this. Immediately after the creation of the world, he says, justice, and truth, and every virtue dwelt upon the earth; but they speedily yielded to their opposites, and for their recovery mankind was divided into companies of thousands. From these thousands was chosen a man, most loyal, most strong, and of most noble courage, and better "ensegned" and mannered than all the others. For him a beast was sought, and it was found that the horse was the most noble and the best to serve man. "After the horse—which is called Chyval in French—is that man named Chyvaller, which is knight in English; thus to the most noble man was given the most noble beast."

This is so far true, that the word chivalry is derived from the French cheval, and was applied to the mounted part of the army—the cavalry—naturally the strongest arm in mediæval warfare. Knight, however, is a word of Anglo-Saxon origin—from *cnicht*, a servant—afterwards applied only to those who rode after their lords. There is, again, the old German word, *knetchen*—meaning youths—which was applied to the sprigs of nobility who surrounded the great chiefs. These martial youths of Germany are referred to by Latin historians as "*Juvenes*." At what period the name of knight came to be applied exclusively to a particular class of soldiers, is not easy to determine. But there was an essential difference at first between the mere "*ritter*," or rider after his lord, and the *chevalier*, or *chevalliero*. This name appears in various forms, in the Italian, French, and Spanish romances; and it applied to one who was under an obligation for his tenure of land to furnish a horse for the service of his lord in the field. Thus, pace good Caxton, *chevalirie*, Anglicised into chivalry, really signified a tenement of land by military service. In time it came to mean a great deal more, just as knight came to mean something much nobler than a mere mounted manservant; but the real origin of chivalry as an Order was neither in Christianity nor in poetry, but in feudalism. Now feudal government implied social protection on the principle of mutual service. It was a system of hauteur towards equals, and arrogance towards inferiors, yet also of firm cohesive principles, which principles were superior to, and survived the system.

Chivalry, then, was an expression of

feudalism, as witnessed in the submissive obedience of the knight to his lord, and it was also disciplined by feudalism in the influence exercised by the noble ladies on the knightly retinue, and in the recognition and reward of military duties by the superior. Yet in feudalism there was a restraint, typified in the gloomy old castles, from which chivalry in time broke away, as the elements of romance and love of adventure began to flourish. Knights then banded themselves together, not for feudal service to one man, but for the service of humanity. Perhaps in chivalry—at all events in its highest and most ideal aspect—the philosophic mind may trace the germ of Positivism. Only we are not to suppose that chivalry and knight-errantry were always identical. The knight-errant professed to have a mission to set the world right, and to aid his suffering fellow-creatures; but his object was usually adventure, or plunder, or self-glorification—three things which true chivalry discouraged.

How far religion, and how far the restlessness of knight-errantry had to do with the Crusades, it is not easy now to determine, but it is as possible to regard the Mediæval Crusaders with some respect as the exponents of a coherent and definite scheme of chivalry, as it is impossible not to ridicule the poor, stilted, grotesque figures who pranced through Europe as knights-errant, seeking what they might devour. Richard Cœur de Lion used always to be held up as a model crusader, and Blondel, his friend or retainer, as a model of chivalrous devotion; but now we are told that Richard was a brutal tyrant, without a generous impulse, and Blondel another myth of the Middle Ages. Alas, the pity of it! If we are to sacrifice the romantic story of Richard and Blondel, shall we not also have to surrender much of our old strong belief in the beauty of the "singular institution," which has been so useful to generations of poets and romancists?

The Troubadours are regarded as post-singers who kept alive the spirit of chivalry, and who promoted the worship of it among people of all degrees. It is much more likely that they were the cause of its decay. It must have been excessively tiresome to have to listen, in season and out of season, to interminable doggerel about the beautiful damsel imprisoned by the cruel baron in the gloomy castle guarded by giants and dragons under the

control of a fiendish magician; and about the courtly knight who overcame them all, and released the beauteous prisoner. The story might vary a little in detail—sometimes there were no giants and no magician, sometimes the baron was himself a necromancer, and so on—but the object was always the same, to extol the astonishing prowess of the gentlemen who walked into other people's castles and carried off their lady guests. It is to be feared they did not always treat their fair captives well—even Prince Geraint was very cruel to the gentle Enid after she became his wife; but the Troubadours, like our modern novelists, looked upon the romance of life as ended with marriage.

It was in the days of Edward the Third that chivalry is supposed to have reached its highest perfection in this country. The figures of the Black Prince, and that "Flower of Chivalry," Sir John Chandos, stand forth as bright and shining examples of what the peerless knight was or ought to have been. Only men do not swear by Froissart now as they used to do, and Green ridicules his pictures of chivalry as "picturesque mimicry." The Black Prince's chivalry, at any rate, did not prevent him from treating the people he conquered with all the savagery of a brutal nature.

The truth seems to be this, that chivalry was an ideal of perfection, of all that was noble and graceful and worthy in human nature, framed in accordance with the standards of the times. It never, at any period of its existence, realised the full worth and purity of the ideal; but then what form of society or code of manners does?

Even the ideal was lost long before Caxton published "The Book of the Order of Chivalry," with the object of stirring the gentlemen of his time to deeds of derring-do. "How many knights are there now in England," he asked, in 1484, "that have the use and exercise of a knight, that is to say, that he knoweth his horse and his horse him, ready to a point, to have all things that belongeth a knight, a horse that is according and broken after its kind, his armour and harness meet and fitting?"

"The exercises of chivalry are not used and honoured," he complains, "as they were in ancient time, when the noble acts of the knights of England that used chivalry were renowned through the uni-

versal world. O! ye knights of England, where is the custom and usage of noble chivalry? What do ye now but go to the bains to play at dice? Leave this, leave it, and read the noble volumes of St. Graal, of Launcelot, of Tristram, of Galahad, of Perceval, of Gawain, and many more! There shall ye see manhood, courtesy, and gentleness."

But Caxton applied the spur in vain. Gunpowder had begun the work of destruction which the schoolmaster completed, and the Order of Chivalry was as dead as Cleopatra. Of course one does not forget Sir Philip Sidney, the chivalrous soldier, Spenser, the chivalrous poet, and Bayard, the chevalier without fear and without reproach. But you cannot construct an Order out of an occasional figure, or you must follow the Order of Chivalry to Khartoum, and bury it sorrowfully with the body of Charles Gordon.

The schoolmaster, as we say, completed the destruction begun by gunpowder—what room for knightly courage was there before a smoking tube, beyond the reach of sword and lance?—but there were other contributory causes. In this country the Wars of the Roses, and in France the Wars with the Huguenots, aided effectually in abolishing what remained of chivalry as an institution. Think for a moment what the Wars of the Roses cost this country. The slain during thirty years included some eighty-five thousand private soldiers of a generation in which the feudal instinct still survived in strength greater than was inherited by their children. But the death-roll also included two kings, one prince, ten dukes, two marquises, twenty earls, thirty lords, one hundred and thirty knights, and four hundred and fifty esquires. What aristocracy in the world could stand such a blow as that within a lifetime, without completely altering its character? It was reserved for James the First, however, to destroy the glory of knighthood by selling the "honour" to all who were willing and able to pay for it.

Puritanism, says Buckle, killed chivalry—which also is true to some extent. Yet it is needful to remember that the religious association and moral aspect of chivalry have always attracted religious teachers.

The Order of Chivalry died, covered with ridicule; and it probably never deserved much of the praise and glory it has received. But the spirit of chivalry exists, and is for all time—in spite of the

fears of Mr. Robert Buchanan. The fashion of its expression must change with time and manners, and we must not look for it in obsolete forms. It is no longer necessary for a man to show his reverence for woman by making an ass of himself, nor need he now ride abroad in search of human wrongs to redress. The work of the modern knight-errant lies at his own door; and surely there never was an age when the spirit of philanthropy was larger or more earnest than it is now. A knight, according to Caxton, ought to be charitable, and everything virtuous should adorn his character; he ought to be truthful, and to do nothing below the dignity of a gentleman. The same obligations exist now, when, as Hallam says, the character of a knight is represented in that of a gentleman. Certainly the position of woman is vastly superior in these later days, when chivalry is expressed in courtesy; and the position of the "masses" was never so good as now, when knight-errantry is represented by the social reformer.

POURQUOIPAS.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

WHEN Mr. Fletcher awoke—there was no mistake about it this time—it was broad day. He lay for some moments revelling in the first joy of waking. When he thought of the events of the night, he laughed aloud; they were so utterly absurd. Remembering the scraps of paper, he sat up in bed to look for them. In rising, his glance fell upon his pillow. There, on the snowy linen, within half an inch of where his cheek had just been resting, branded, as it seemed, in blood, was the impress of a horse's hoof.

Mr. Fletcher managed, during the early portion of that day, to avoid his hostess. He went out into the village. There appeared to be only one shop in the place. At the door of that establishment stood a man. He was a big, burly fellow in blouse and sabots. He looked a companionable soul. Mr. Fletcher found him what he looked—a gossip. Mr. Fletcher began by alluding to the natural beauties of the neighbourhood. He then remarked that he was staying at "La Boule d'Or," the landlord of which, he understood, had lately died.

"It was time he did."

"Such a scamp, was he?"

"As honest a man as ever lived."

Mr. Fletcher pricked up his ears at this.

"Rather wild, wasn't he?"

"There never was a quieter soul."

"But wasn't he extravagant?"

"Extravagant! For example, he never had a sou to spend."

"That, I suppose, was after he had spent all he had to spend?"

"After?"

Monsieur Bonchard—the name was painted on the little window over his door—cast at Mr. Fletcher a contemplative glance. He placed his hands on the upper portion of his capacious stomach.

"I see."

"What do you see?"

"You have been listening to Madame Peltier."

"Madame Peltier certainly gave me to understand that he was not all a husband should have been."

"Marie!" Monsieur Bonchard called into the shop. A feminine reproduction of himself came towards the front. "What sort of husband was Peltier, up at the 'Hôtel de la Boule d'Or'?"

"A model husband. A true model."

"As for his wife——"

The lady interposed.

"It is not for us to say anything."

"I was his friend; it is for me to say the truth. She murdered him!"

"Murdered him!"

Mr. Fletcher felt that the authorities were too conflicting.

"Not with a pistol and a knife, but with her cruelty. She led him the life of a dog! She did not let him have enough to eat; she would not let him have a sou to call his own; she would not let him have his liberty; she used to lock him up in a room for days; she beat him."

"Beat him!"

"Never shall I forget one night he came to me. He was crying—ah! like my little baby. 'Bonchard,' he said, 'it is finished. She has beaten me!'"

"With her shoe," explained the lady, "as though he were a little child."

"He was a very little man; she was a big woman; he was as nothing in her hands. She used to say she would show him as a dwarf. Ah, what he suffered! He had a spirit which was too large for his body. After that beating—Monsieur, he was black and blue, with my own eyes I saw the bruises!—within a week he was

no more—he was dead. That is why I say she murdered him.”

“One tale is good,” reflected Mr. Fletcher, “until another is told. The fault does not appear to have been all upon one side. If she beat him with her shoes—degradation not to be surpassed—I don’t wonder that he preferred the bosom of Pourquoipas.”

Corroboration of Monsieur Bonchard’s story was obtained from another quarter—from the Breton maid who waited upon him at his midday meal.

“What sort of man was the late Monsieur Peltier?”

“An angel.”

Mr. Fletcher felt that this was strong. The maid did not look as though she was an enthusiastic damsel. On the other hand still less did Monsieur Peltier—in his portrait—look as though he were an angel.

“What was there angelic about him?”

“He was so good; that was his fault—he was too good. He was a little man—such a little man—one could have nursed him like a baby.”

Mr. Fletcher was conscious that there might be drawbacks in being nursed like a baby.

“I suppose, then, that he and his wife lived happily together?”

“Happily! Ah, for example!” The damsel was standing by his chair. Stooping, she whispered in his ear: “Madame has a tongue!” Standing up, she looked about her, possibly to see if the coast was clear: “And Madame has an arm! You see that?” She pointed to a red mark upon her cheek. “She has just done it. She may be big, but I will let her know that next time she slaps me it shall not be for nothing.”

It was possible that the damsel’s evidence was prejudiced. When one has just been slapped, one does not, necessarily, have a high opinion of the slapper. Still, straws show which way the wind is blowing. It was evident that public opinion was not unanimous in reprobating Monsieur Peltier.

Mr. Fletcher did not see his hostess until after supper. He was quitting the *salle à manger* when he heard the sound of sobbing. The sound proceeded from a little room at the foot of the stairs. The door of the room was open. In it was Madame Peltier.

“Monsieur, I entreat you, enter.”

Mr. Fletcher entered.

“It is all over. It is done. It is finished.”

Mr. Fletcher inquired what was finished.

“I am ruined. It is of no consequence to any one—that I know very well—but it is all the world to me.”

Mr. Fletcher asked—being driven upon the paths of cross-examination—in what way she was ruined.

“I have just given orders that all my horses—Pourquoipas alone is worth five-and-twenty thousand francs—and all the money I have in the world are to be sent to a man in Morlaix, of whom I have not even heard the name.”

“You are not serious?”

“Do I look as though I were not serious, monsieur? What would you have? Ask Sam Tucker. He is going to take both the money and the horses.”

“If you really have given such an order, I would earnestly advise you to countermand it. You don’t mean to say, now you have had an opportunity for quiet thought, that you are not yourself persuaded that you have been the victim of a trick?”

“What do you call a trick? Was that a trick last night? Do not tell me I do not know my own husband, if you please. All this morning I say to myself, ‘I will go into the stable. No, no, no!’ This afternoon I find upon my table a piece of paper—‘Come!’ Who put it there? It is in my husband’s writing. I went to the stable, although I said to myself I would not go. I have heard there from Pourquoipas—ah, what I have heard! Never was I spoken to in such a way before. And by a horse! Ciel! It is a wonder I am not dead! It is enough that I promised to send the horses and the money, by Sam Tucker, to a man at Morlaix, whose name even I do not know.”

“I would strongly advise you to put off the fulfilment of your promise, at any rate, until the morning.”

“It is impossible! I am not a woman without courage; but I do not dare.”

She did dare. Mr. Fletcher persuaded her. The sacrifice was postponed.

“Now,” the gentleman told himself, “unless I am greatly mistaken, to-night I shall have another visitor, as the consequence of meddling with the affairs of others!”

His forebodings were realised—he had a visitor! He put off retiring to the latest possible moment. When he did seek the privacy of his own apartment, he still postponed the act of going to bed.

“I think I remember seeing somewhere

a little play called, 'Diamond cut Diamond.' If I am to receive a visitor, I think I'll receive him sitting up. I shall be able to offer him more courtesy than I should if I were in bed."

He put out the candle, taking care to have it within easy reach. He put a box of matches in his pocket—only regretting that there was no lantern handy. Taking off his boots, he sat down in a chair and waited. He waited hours. Nothing broke the silence of the night. No church clock told of the flight of time.

"One might almost think that some one had told my friend that I had a six-shooter in my pocket, the better to do him honour. If something doesn't happen soon I shall either have to walk about, or else go to sleep in my chair—and if it comes to that, I'd better go to bed."

The night stole on. Still nothing to break the monotony of waiting in the dark. More than once Mr. Fletcher had caught his chin in the act of falling forward on to his chest—his yawns became prodigious!

"It begins to occur to me that, at my time of life, nothing and no one is worth sitting up for all night. I'm off to bed."

He was about to go to bed, and, for that purpose, had already risen from his seat, when—he heard a sound!

"What's that?"

It might have been the creaking of a board. It might have been the movement of a mouse. It might have been any of the trifling noises of which we are conscious in the silence of the night. Of one thing only he was certain—he had heard a sound! He listened, his sense of hearing almost unnaturally alert. A sound again!

"Perhaps, after all, it's nothing but a mouse."

If it was a mouse, it was a curious one. The sound became plainer. It seemed to Mr. Fletcher that it was coming nearer.

"It's some one moving. I hope to goodness it isn't that old idiot, Madame."

But it did not seem as if it proceeded from the stairs. Surely, if she came at all, she would come that way.

"It strikes me that it is some one in the other room. For all I know, there may be some one sleeping there. Halloa! What's that?"

It was a ray of light—the merest pencil! It gleamed, like a streak of molten metal, across the floor.

"As I'm a Dutchman—it's shining through the wall!"

It was, there could be no doubt of it. It came through a crevice in the wainscot.

"I have it! I spot it all! Now for the next card in the game—it'll be a call for trumps. I rather fancy, too, that I shall be able to trump this little trick."

The pencil of light grew wider.

"They're slipping a panel in the wainscot—just behind the head of my bed! This thing gets beautifully plain!"

With a cat-like step, Mr. Fletcher moved towards the bed. The pencil of light was ceasing to be a pencil—it began to illuminate the room.

"Steady, my friend, that panel distinctly creaked. You must oil it next time, before you play this game. In delicate operations of this kind, 'trifles light as air' are apt to spoil the full effect."

The room was in that state of semi-radiance which had puzzled Mr. Fletcher on the previous night.

"Now, my friend, is it now? It is! He's coming! Trumped. Good evening, dear friend, good evening!"

With one hand he had some one by the collar of his coat, with the other he pointed a revolver into some one's face.

"Good evening, dear friend, good evening."

There ensued an interval for reflection. The captive seemed momentarily paralysed; the captor was taking stock. The prisoner was a little man—a very little man, scarcely reaching above Mr. Fletcher's waist.

"After all!"

The words proceeded from the little man in something between a moan and a gasp.

"As you say, my friend, after all—after all we meet again. Perhaps you will permit me to strike a light—my light? Your light we will examine later on."

The little man offered no resistance when his captor drew him towards the table. He stood in silence while the candle was being lit; nor did he flinch when Mr. Fletcher held it in front of his face, the better to see what manner of man he was.

"From the look of you, I should say you were the late Peltier's Corsican brother."

"You have a revolver. Shoot me. It is better so."

"It may be better so—a little later in the evening. At the present, it seems to

me that it would be a pity. Let me place you on the table.

Lifting him in his arms, Mr. Fletcher seated him on the edge of the table, the little man remaining as docile as a child. When, however, he had gained that post of vantage, "What it is to have been born a little man!" he groaned.

"The situation is not without its compensations. Women, mistaking your age, may bestow on you their caresses as generously as though you were a little boy. Now, may I ask—I trust you will not deem the question an impertinence—who you are, and what's your little game?"

"Do you not know me?"

"Unless you are the ghost of the late lamented Peltier, I am afraid I don't."

"I am Peltier himself."

"Peltier! Ernest! Whew!" Mr. Fletcher whistled. "But I thought that you were dead."

"In the morning I shall be dead."

The little man spoke with an air of tragic gloom.

"But so far as I understand the rights of the matter, you are—or you ought to be—stone dead now. You are buried."

"My coffin is buried."

The little man was still. Looking at him, marking his air of extreme depression, Mr. Fletcher began, faintly, to realise the situation.

"You do not understand?"

"Not yet—exactly."

"Although you do not understand—you have ruined me. It seems to me that that is well. Is it because you love my wife?"

"Your wife! Well, not precisely."

"What is it, then? You think, no doubt, you have done a brave thing, a clever thing, you, a stranger, who came into this country for the first time yesterday. You are mistaken. You see, I am a small man. My wife, she is as big as a house. Ever since the day I married her she has made my life no life at all. I could do nothing against her, she did with me as she pleased. Once I ran away. I did not go far, I had only three francs in my pocket. Those I had to steal. Sometimes, two, three times a day she would look to see if there was any money in my pockets. She found me, she brought me back, she locked me up, for three whole weeks, in this very room. She took away my clothes. She left me but my drawers, my slippers, and my shirt. That was very funny, was it

not? For you; but not for me. Oh, mon Dieu! After all, I am a man."

In the uncertain light Mr. Fletcher saw that the tears were rolling down the speaker's cheeks.

"I was ashamed to complain to people of the treatment I received, though I do not doubt that it was plain enough to all the world. I thought once or twice of killing her; but it seemed to me that it would be better that I should kill myself rather than her. This reflection put into my head the beginning of a scheme. At last things came to a crisis. She—she beat me. She beat me as though I were a child—me, a man of honour—with a slipper upon her knee! It is incredible, but it is none the less the truth, she beat me until I cried with pain! That was enough. I arranged my scheme. I pretended to be ill. I knew that she was very superstitious. I told her that, when I was dead, my soul would pass into the body of a horse."

"Pourquoipas?"

"Into the body of Pourquoipas. No sooner had I said it than I seemed to die."

"How did you manage that?"

"I swallowed a draught which made it seem—to her—that I was dead."

"But how about the doctor? Aren't such things as certificates of death known in this part of the world?"

"Sam Tucker saw to that."

"I thought our friend the jockey had a finger in the pie."

"He has been a good friend to me, Sam Tucker. She lost no time in putting me into a coffin. Dead, she feared me more than living. Sam Tucker fastened down the lid."

"Having first, I suppose, taken care to see that you were out of it."

"That is so. When the coffin had been buried we got her down into the stable. I spoke to her, as she thought, out of the mouth of Pourquoipas."

"And, pray, how was that edifying performance arranged? You spoke to me, you must remember, out of the mouth of Pourquoipas."

"It was very simple. There is a cellar underneath the stable. A small grating opens into the box of Pourquoipas. I spoke through the grating. You were easily deceived."

"You think so, do you? It seems to me, my friend, that you're a past master in deception."

"My idea was to frighten my wife into sending the horses—which, after all, are my own property—and a sum of money to an address in Morlaix. Then I should be able to start the world afresh, freed from the chains of slavery. There can be no doubt she would have sent them. You came upon the scene. By meddling in the affairs of others you have ruined all. It seems that I must starve, and, after all——"

"Hist! What's that?" Mr. Fletcher caught Monsieur Peltier by the arm. "There's some one coming up the stairs, and I'll bet a dollar it's your wife. Hide behind the curtains of the bed."

There came a tapping at the door.

"Who's there?"

"Open, monsieur, open!" When the door was opened, Madame Peltier stood without, in the airy costume of the night before. "Monsieur, I cannot sleep, it is no good. All the night I think that I hear voices——"

A figure advanced into the centre of the room, the figure of a very little man.

"Agnes!"

The lady fainted. Sixteen solid stone fell with a thud upon the ground. Mr. Fletcher brought her round in course of time.

"It was Ernest!"

"Upon my word," said Mr. Fletcher, "I believe it was."

"It is enough. Better to be ruined, than to die. I will send the money and the horses in the morning."

And she sent them!

AN ITALIAN IRISHMAN.

IN the beginning of the year 1802, during the short peace that followed the Treaty of Amiens, four boys and a man left the Lombard Highlands, passed over the Alps, tramped through Switzerland, and travelled along the Rhine, making for a northern seaport. The man—Andrea Faroni by name—had been well paid to bring the four boys to London, where arrangements had been made to apprentice them to respectable tradesmen. The respectable tradesmen, however, were saved all trouble in this respect; for, with the financial genius of the country from which we derive the familiar sign of the three golden balls, Faroni kept the money and took the lads to Ireland instead of to their proper destination.

It thus happened that in the summer of 1802, a chubby, bright-eyed, curly-headed, pleasant-faced Italian boy, some fifteen years of age, was to be seen wandering about the streets of Dublin selling cheap prints in leaden frames. All the English the little fellow knew was "Buy! Buy!" and when asked the price he had to count the number of pennies on his fingers. Such was the humble beginning of the career of a man, who, without friends or money, culture or genius, rose to opulence and honour, and became a distinguished benefactor of his adopted country, contributing largely to its material prosperity.

The pictures sold by young Charles Bianconi represented sacred subjects, the Royal Family, Bonaparte and his most famous generals, and other popular heroes. When the metropolitan demand for this kind of art slackened, the youth was sent into the provinces as far as Waterford and Clonmel, having by this time picked up a little more English. The profits of the print-selling went into the master's pocket; but at the end of a year and a half Faroni behaved more handsomely than might have been expected. He restored the lad his freedom and—what was perhaps as valuable—his purse containing one hundred louis d'or.

With this capital, stout limbs, and a light heart, Charles Bianconi began the world on his own account. He procured a deal box, filled it with prints, strapped it on his shoulders, and became a pedlar, travelling twenty to thirty miles a day on foot. Such a life was simple drudgery, intolerable to a young fellow of spirit. At this period the contrast between himself and the man who could afford to ride or drive struck him very forcibly, and he determined "to become somebody"—a determination which he kept before him all the rest of his days.

Like every other stranger who has wandered through the south of Ireland, the friendless Italian boy found the people kindly, genial, and social. He had much in common with the warmhearted Celts, and he soon became a favourite in some pleasant family circles. Probably a desire to rise in the social scale first made him ashamed of his great box of prints. At all events he discarded it, and procured a more genteel article in the form of a portfolio.

But even a portfolio could not reconcile him to the disagreeable and vulgar calling of a pedlar; so in 1806 he turned carver

and gilder, and opened a shop in Carrick-on-Suir. Carrick, however, was too small or too inartistic a town to afford sufficient scope for the new enterprise. He therefore removed to Waterford, where he issued cards "showing," he says, "that I was a carver and gilder of the first class." Whether he was really "a carver and gilder of the first class," may be doubted, for he naïvely informs us: "I made up for the want of knowledge in the manual details of my business by incessant industry. I frequently worked from six in the morning until two hours after midnight, with the exception of two hours for dinner and recreation." It was by such indefatigable industry, and a certain tenacity of purpose more characteristic of the northern races than of the southern, that he laid the foundations of his future success. At this time, though he had but little leisure, he managed to read Smith's "Wealth of Nations," and was much struck by the chapters on the division of labour and the value of time.

After two not unprosperous years, Bianconi removed to Clonmel, which henceforth became his home. Here he set up in a corner shop, and was hence called by a rough pun, "Bryan Cooney," namely, Bryan of the Corner. The Cooneys had once been an important sept in the neighbourhood. Some of them were still to the fore, and our hero was surprised one market day by an old lady who had driven in a good distance to enquire as to what branch of the clan he belonged!

In Clonmel he added a little to his receipts by taking in lodgers, and thereby ran considerable risk of matrimony; for though he was not very fond of the ladies, the ladies were fond of him. His first tenant, a fashionable milliner named Mary Anne K——, invited him to meet her aunt at tea. The aunt thought it an excellent opportunity to get the young lady comfortably settled in life; so, taking Bianconi into a corner, she said, in her severest tones:

"What do you mean by your attentions to my niece? Do you purpose seeking her in marriage?"

"Bedad, ma'am," said Bianconi, "I've no time to get married, but I'll find you a husband for Mary Anne." And with characteristic energy he soon provided a young man who pleased both the ladies.

Bianconi now became completely identified with the people of his adopted country. He had lost all traces of his Italian origin

—except his name and a slight foreign accent—and was rapidly growing more Irish than the Irish themselves.

It is, of course, by his system of cars that Charles Bianconi is best known, and will be remembered. The hardships of the peasantry in going from place to place on foot, the memory of what he had himself suffered, and, possibly, the prospect of inaugurating a profitable business, made him ponder deeply the subject of improved locomotion. At that time railways existed only in the prophetic mind of George Stephenson. In Ireland travelling was difficult, and public conveyances were few, even on the great lines of road. For instance, the only means of communication between Carrick-on-Suir and Waterford—a distance of sixteen miles by road, and thirty by water—was Tom Morrissey's boat, which carried ten persons, and made the journey in five hours, tide permitting. Neither Tom nor the passengers appear to have paid much attention to the tides, trusting probably to the usual good fortune of the careless. It struck Bianconi that the man who organised a cheap and regular system of communication would deserve well of his country, and, perhaps, make his own fortune. As a small contribution to this end, in July, 1815, he started a one-horse jaunting-car, to run daily from Clonmel to Cahir, eight miles off, returning every evening. It was not a success, for, unfortunately, then, as now, the Irish peasant had more time than money to spend.

Another man would have given up the enterprise in despair. But Bianconi was not as other men. The able general is greater in defeat than in victory. The wily Italian resorted to a ruse. He privately started an opposition car to his own at a cheaper fare. Nobody knew the secret—not even the rival drivers, who raced against each other as only Irish drivers or American steamboat captains can race. The excitement, the rivalry, the free lifts, the cheap fares, appealed so powerfully to the people, that in a short time both cars came in full.

Thus began that great net-work of communication which became famous throughout the civilised world. The business gradually and steadily increased under the active superintendence of the proprietor. It is unnecessary to dwell on the details of this increase, but a few interesting particulars of the establishment as it stood in 1857 may be given. In that year

Bianconi had agents in every part of Ireland except the north-east corner. He had nearly five hundred persons in his employment; he kept one thousand four hundred horses; his vehicles ran four thousand three hundred miles every day, and traversed twenty-two counties. Between passenger traffic and mail contracts the annual income nearly touched the handsome figure of forty thousand pounds.

The cars themselves were of three kinds: "Finn McCools," or heavy vans, drawn by two or three horses, and carrying sixteen persons; "Faugh-a-ballaghs," or two-wheeled vehicles, drawn by one horse; and a middle class known by the name of "Massey Dawsons"—so called after a famous sporting squire in the south of Ireland. They were all built in the style of the ordinary Irish jaunting-car, with which everybody is familiar, and travelled at an average rate of seven miles an hour: no despicable speed, taking all the circumstances into consideration.

Bianconi found—as modern tramway and omnibus companies still find—that passenger traffic offers many opportunities of speculation. To prevent this he invented and applied a most elaborate system of checks and counterchecks. Whether it was effectual can hardly be known, but it was certainly far-reaching, for it "extended to forbidding a groom's wife to keep hens, lest the oats should find a wrong direction." His great reliance, however, was placed upon spies. The "official spies" were always on the road. They were supplied with money to pay their fares and tip the drivers. But the drivers were not often caught napping. It was a war of stratagem and artifice, into which Irishmen enter with peculiar delight; and when a carpet-bag stuffed with bran-dust, or some other untoward incident revealed the travelling spy, the news ran along the line like wildfire.

It is worthy of note that Bianconi did not oppose the introduction of railways. He was shrewd enough to see the futility of resisting the inevitable, and he even took shares in some of the lines. The railways did not do him so much harm as might be supposed; but they drove him to seek fresh fields and pastures new for his cars, and thus remote localities received the advantages of regular communication with the outer world.

Turning to the more immediate personal concerns of our hero, we find him, in 1826, shutting up his shop and concentrating his

energies on the car business, with a balance at his bankers of somewhat two thousand pounds. Having thus "risen to affluence and a billed shirt"—to borrow the expressive language of the immortal Colonel Starbottle—he proceeded to woo and win Miss Mary Hayes, the daughter of a wealthy Dublin stockbroker, and the happy pair settled down in Clonmel. His ideas of home life were somewhat different from those of the ordinary British Philistine; but he proved a tender husband and an indulgent father. After his marriage he was infected with that disease which is peculiarly virulent in Ireland, namely "earth hunger." Being an alien, however, he was incapable of owning land. In those days it was very difficult for a foreigner to become a British subject; but after a great deal of trouble he was naturalised in 1831.

Meantime, as was natural in a Roman Catholic, he threw himself heart and soul into the Emancipation movement. Indeed, throughout his long life he took a deep and active interest in political affairs, being for many years the intimate friend of Dan O'Connell, to whose memory he erected a monument in Rome. But Bianconi was a man of independent views. Though he bowed to the authority of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in most things, he stood up against them in the cause of national education; and he had small sympathy with the extreme Young Ireland Party of '48. His daughter says:

"Priests, politicians, and patriots overran my father's house in those days. He did not doubt they were sincere, but he could not refrain from drawing a moral of the melancholy results consequent upon not staying at home and minding one's own business."

In local affairs Bianconi played a distinguished part. He entered the Clonmel Town Council, and in 1844 became Mayor of the Borough, a position which he prized and adorned. As Chief Magistrate he ruled the little community like a patriarchal autocrat, distributing justice, charity, and advice liberally and impartially. But though fond of making "neat speeches," he was not always sure of the correctness of his language, for, after a decision, he would say to his clerk, "Tom, is that English?"

Meanwhile he had been gratifying the "earth hunger"—at one time or another he spent over seventy thousand pounds in the purchase of land—and in 1846 he obtained a pretty little place at Longfield,

near Clonmel, which thenceforth became his constant residence.

Some years after this he visited Italy, spending two winters in Rome and three in Pisa. After an absence of half a century, his native land was little to his taste. He had completely lost touch with its inhabitants, as the following incident shows:

"Going with an English friend on a ride to Tivoli, he stopped to examine a shepherd as to his mode of life, and expressed much wonder because the peasant only put on clean linen once a week; but the shepherd refused point-blank to believe that my father could be so wasteful as to want a clean shirt every day."

Perhaps the reader may also "express much wonder" as to how often Bianconi changed his own linen when he was peddling twopenny engravings and living in a Dublin slum.

In 1865 our hero had the misfortune to break his thigh, an accident from which he never completely recovered. During the remainder of his life he was compelled to go about on crutches or on a wheeled chair. But the activity of his nature could not be repressed. He threw himself into the 1868 election with all his old fervour, and was gratified by a great Liberal victory.

After the accident he disposed of his business to his agents, on reasonable terms, and, thenceforth, the cars knew him no more, though, in many places, his name clings to them still.

To a man who had led such an active life, rest was impossible, and motion a necessity. In his old age, and despite his broken limb, he rushed about in his carriage or his wheeled chair to petty sessions, grand juries, shows, and meetings of all sorts; and to the end he took a lively interest in affairs political, ecclesiastical, and social.

A day or two before he died he was too feeble to read his own letters, yet, as his clerk read them to him, he discovered an error of eightpence in a large rent account! The ruling passion still held him in its grasp. But all his earthly accounts were finally closed in September, 1875, when he passed away peacefully at the ripe age of eighty-nine, and was laid to rest in the mortuary chapel he had built for himself and his family.

The character of this remarkable man was composed of many incongruous traits. He possessed many of the characteristics

common to self-made men, together with some peculiarities wholly his own. He was not ashamed of his humble origin; nay, he was proud of it, and used to boast that he had been "pedlar, shopkeeper, car-owner, land-owner, alderman, mayor, county magistrate, grand-juror, and deputy-lieutenant for his county." His memory for faces was abnormal. He knew every man in his employment, and had the knack of always selecting the right man for the right place.

His early poverty seems to have left an enduring mark upon Bianconi's character. He was always particular about money matters, often strangely penurious even in his affluence. When an old man he declared he would walk a mile to save sixpence; and while abroad he actually did write letters "more than double the length of those he wrote at home, to get the full value out of the postage stamp." When driving in his carriage he would pick up a passenger on the road, provided the man paid the same fare as by the public car. He frequently resorted to some cunning device in order to take a petty advantage of his tenants. On the other hand, however, he was both liberal and charitable. His drivers had orders to give free lifts to poor people, and especially to women carrying babies; and the whole of his fees and emoluments as Mayor of Clonmel he gave to charitable purposes. Indeed, he seems to have been popular among all classes. It is a remarkable fact that his cars were never stopped either by day or night, not even during the Tithe troubles and the White-boy rising, though they carried His Majesty's mails.

Bianconi's hospitality was unstinted, especially to the clergy. All his life he was a religious man—perhaps more after the southern manner than the northern. He taught Scripture and Catechism classes, and attended Mass every Saturday morning, winter and summer. An amusing account is given of his devotions when he resided in Clonmel:

"Every Saturday evening he rushed into the small, dark friary chapel, and threw himself on his knees before a certain confessor. Any fair devotee who happened to be before him would be requested by the priest to give place to the busy foreigner. While a lady would be saying her 'Confiteor,' Charles Bianconi would have prayed, and confessed, and gone off again."

If it be a mark of genius to write an illegible hand, then Bianconi was a genius of the first order. Often after writing a letter, he was unable to read it himself. In this dilemma he would call up Pat O'Neill, who could decipher the hieroglyphics with the ease of an Edgar Allan Poe. Bianconi once wrote to Mr. Hayes from London. Mr. Hayes was unable to make out the address to which the reply should be sent, so he cut it off, and fastened it to the outside of the envelope, trusting to the ingenuity of the post office sorters. Strange to say, the letter reached its destination in due course.

Three children were born to Bianconi; but only one survived him. This was the younger daughter, who married Morgan John O'Connell, a nephew of the Liberator, and it is to her biography that we owe most of our information about her father's private life and character.

The present writer is old enough to remember a time when the only public conveyance to many considerable towns in Ireland was "Bianconi's long car." Its appearance created a great stir all along the route. As the hour of its arrival approaches, there is an unusual bustle about the inn door. Suddenly the van drives up at a spanking pace, and in a moment all is activity and confusion. The ostlers run out; the passengers alight, stamp their feet, and rush into the inn; the stationer gets his papers; the postman flies off with the mails; the parcels are sorted out and delivered to their owners; and the gossips, male and female, fall a-talking over the latest news. Meantime, the horses are changed; those passengers who have further to go rush out and get on again; the driver mounts his seat and cracks his whip, and away goes the long car amid a cloud of dust, and the "whoops" and "hurroos" of the numerous small boys that everywhere abound.

Such a scene may yet be witnessed in many a small town in Ireland; but the spread of railways is making these towns rarer. Even after the introduction of railways, Bianconi carried the blessings of civilisation to remote and isolated places beyond their reach. He was a true philanthropist; for, in addition to providing conveyances for the humblest, he greatly cheapened the commodities that the poor require. To use his own illustration, calico which sold in western villages at ninepence or tenpence a yard owing to the dearth of carriage, was sold at five-

pence after he started his cars, so that the peasant could have two shirts instead of one. Also, he helped to break down social prejudices. There were no first-class compartments on his cars: rich and poor travelled back to back.

With all his foibles and failings, Bianconi's character was made of sterling stuff, and its influence will long be felt in the land of his adoption. The poor little Italian who landed on our shores friendless and forlorn, and who, by his own energy and industry, raised himself to wealth, fame, and honour, has left an example which Irishmen will long admire, even if they do not imitate.

A GARRISON ROMANCE.

BY MRS. LEITH ADAMS (MRS. LAFFAN).

Author of "Louis Draycott," "Geoffrey Stirling," "Aun Hepsy's Foundling," etc.

CHAPTER IV.

MASTER PHIL HOLDS A LEVÉE.

IT so happened, just about the time of Master Phil's nocturnal escapade, that there was a scarcity of any item of stirring social interest in the "little military hot-house"; consequently, any small event was seized upon, made the most of, worried, and petted by every one.

By five in the afternoon of the day following on the evening described in our last chapter, Mr. Jones awoke from an after-lunch nap in the cosy arm-chair of his private sitting-room at the hotel, to find himself famous.

Varied were the versions of the adventure with King Baby told and retold by this person and that; alarming, indeed, the positions of peril in which that young potentate was supposed to have been placed, of which that of hanging by a rent in his night-shirt from a nail on the summit of the turret, and being rescued by this wonderful Mr. Jones who climbed up the water-spout "like a cat," while Mrs. Clutterbuck was in strong hysterics in the road below, was one of the most popular with the rank and file of the 193rd.

Several august personages called at the hotel. The waiter, bringing up each card, laid upon a silver salver, held it out as far as possible at arm's length, as though determined to make the most of it.

"But, indeed, I did nothing," said poor Mr. Jones, protesting.

This was looked upon as modest worth ; and ladies said, when they heard of it :

"How sweet of him, isn't it, my dear ? All the same, those Clutterbuck boys are dreadful creatures."

"Plenty, plenty *Inglisé* milords come to see Sir Jones to-day," said the waiter, bowing with the grace of a Figaro ; "Michael plenty run down and up ; make plenty hot" — a crafty representation, which caused the transfer of what Jim would have called a "yellow boy" from the pocket of Sir Jones to that of the obsequious and smiling Michael.

"I am going out," said Mr. Jones. "If any one else calls, I am not at home."

"Very well, signor," replied the other, with a more flourishing bow than before. Then he stood at the door to watch the visitor down the street.

"The English got plenty money ; it is no mattare to take a leetle from them," he observed to a friend, priding himself on his knowledge of the ordinary colloquial manner of speech peculiar to that richly-endowed nation.

Mr. Jones sauntered slowly on under his white umbrella lined with a delicate green, unconscious of certain curious glances cast upon him by the passers-by. Down the Quarantine steps, getting gingerly into his boat, acknowledging the salutes of his men — salutes accompanied by the broadest grins of delight, and much twinkling of gold ear-rings depending from swarthy ears — crossing the blindingly-bright bay, still ran the same thought in his head, like the burden of some sweet song :

"Shall I see her to-day ? Shall I see her to-day ?"

As he neared the shore at Sleima, another thought grew out of that dominant one—a thought that made his heart give a bound under his spotless white waistcoat, and sent a wave of colour to his face. If he did see the fair original of the picture on the easel, if he did meet and greet Mabel Graham to-day, she could hardly look upon him as a perfect stranger—not just as she would have done if last night had never been.

Had not Jim—that most "bavard" of urchins !—said that little Phil was her "heart's idol" ? Mr. Jones was a plain, simple-going man, and hated to be made a fuss over ; but he would not object to a grateful glance from those soft, brown eyes, and a smile from those perfect lips . . . He felt conscious of being

fluttered ; he felt shy at the prospect before him.

"Do not row so hard," he said, from under his awning, to the nearest oarsman ; "it is hot."

"Plenty hot, signor," said the man, showing all the ivory-white teeth in his head ; "gratzie, gratzie, signor," and muttered something in Maltese to his companion.

The boat moved with more stateliness ; but the shore had to come at last, and the olive-tinted arms were held out to help the Signor *Inglisé* to land.

It quickly dawned upon Mr. Jones that he was not the only hero of that day. King Baby was holding a levée, and as conscious of his own importance as any monarch who ever held Court at Saint James's or Buckingham Palace.

They were all there—the whole of what Mrs. Musters, with much curling of the nose, was wont to describe as "the Clutterbuck lot."

Sir Peyton Paling, in a state of much excitement and gush, was balancing himself on heels and toes on the hearth-rug, stuttering a good deal, and much hampered by Jim, who always took a keen interest in him, and liked to stand close to him and look straight up into his face.

Whatever Jim did, Algie did ; so there were two hangers-on to the long and somewhat uncertain legs of the bibulous one, and, as a natural consequence, he nearly fell over them as he rushed forward to greet Mr. Jones.

"See the conquering hero cuc-cuc-cuc-cuc-cuc-cuc," he said, munching his words as usual. "Bless my soul, sir ! I congratulate you, I do, 'pon honour. Presence of mind—grand thing, that—n-n-nothing like it ; but for you, our young friend here"—here he blinked round with short-sighted eyes for Master Phil, in white frock and blue ribbons, but failed to find him—"our young friend there—wherever that may be—would be—wouldn't he—Bless my soul, Clutterbuck, the subject's too stupendous. I get confused—I can't face it."

A running ripple of laughter from Jim interrupted this tirade, and Sir Peyton looked down indignantly at the figure at his feet.

"You young sc-sc-scamp," he said, "what are you laughing at ?"

"You look so funny," cried Jim, and as nothing less would relieve his feelings, he lay down on the white, silky rug and

rolled there; Algie joining him with faint squeals, as of a guinea-pig in a high state of delight.

"Gad! Clutterbuck," said the Honourable Bob, screwing his glass into his eye, and gazing with much disfavour upon the two prostrate ones, "these boys of yours ought to be sent to school, you know; they really ought, you know."

"There's no money to pay for it," said Jim, sitting straight up on end, "ma says so, and I'm glad. I don't want to go to school."

"I fancy boys have more scope at home, Dacre, don't you know," said the Major, who had not caught the opening statement of his son's speech, approaching the group, and looking confidently and beamingly at every one; "their tender shoots, if one may so put it, are not so apt to get nipped—frost-bitten, as it were."

"Scope!" cried the Honourable Bob, impatiently; "I should think they have scope indeed; as for that young shaver over there"—pointing to Phil, who now sat enthroned upon the knee of Mr. Jones, surrounded by an admiring and interested group—"I hope you think he showed a taste for scope last night. I should have whacked him well when I'd got him safe in if he'd been mine, give you my word."

The Major shook his head, with a tender, deprecating smile; a smile that seemed to say that when the Honourable Robert Dacre should be a father, he would take a different view of things.

"Still," said Mrs. Clutterbuck, holding up a warning finger—as much as to say that midnight airings on the coping of the turret were to be things of the past with Master Phil—"Phil was a naughty, naughty boy, and frightened poor father very much."

"I was a naughty, naughty boy," echoed the young sinner, with quiet complacency; "I fight'ned fardie benny bad. My officers be welly glad I didn't fall quite down and be breeksed; they'd have been welly solly, poor chaps, if I'd fell right down."

And Phil's "off'cers"—Rowan, Vernon Halkett, the Honourable Bob, Ginger, and the rest—gathered round him, murmured that their grief would have been inexpressible and overwhelming.

"What an overdrawn child!" says some one, reading this, my story.

Well, I am sorry King Baby strikes you in that light. All the excuse I can offer is, that I am drawing him just as he was;

just as I saw him, heard him, knew him, loved him.

Listen to one or two stories about him. Those who have children of their own, and have watched their little budding ways and odd humours, will recognise the ring of reality even when set in the midst of fiction.

King Baby was bidden to a children's party. He was duly attired in his best frock, of which the skirt spread out like a ballet-girl's, and swathed in a sash that made him look, when seen from behind, as though a huge blue butterfly with wings mightily extended had alighted just above his waist, and there poised. All over his bonnie head his hair shone like a glory, and his eyes—blue, to match the butterfly—were wide with anticipation. Arrived, however, at the dazzling halls whither he had been bidden, a change came over the spirit of King Baby. After a long, calm, observant glance at the muster of little ones congregated round, he said, with a long, heavy sigh: "What a lot of chil'ums!" then, stretching out his arms to his sister Mabel, "Take me home."

King Baby did not approve of the world holding so many rival sovereigns. Again, there had been a grand parade on the Floriana ground; ladies had come to witness it—among the rest, Mrs. Clutterbuck, Mabel, and the "scramble." After it was all over, and the "personage" for whom the display had been ordered well under weigh to the Palace, the Major of the 193rd carried his little son into the mess-room, and set him in the middle of the long, narrow table. The fellows were soon round the child you may be sure, while he, watching the many figures all in scarlet-and-gold, and the laughing faces of his beloved "off'cers," looked up the table and down the table, and then, lifting his little hand, and throwing back his bonnie head, cried out:

"S'lute!"

Which they did, amid much laughter and loud applause.

Such was Master Phil—otherwise, King Baby; no common child it will be perceived, and one able to hold his own on all occasions—equally when perched on the highest point of the turret parapet, as on the knees of Mr. Jones, receiving an ovation as one rescued from imminent peril, and restored to a world that could ill do without him.

"Have you seen where he's got the little yellow boy?" said saucy Jim, taking

up his stand by Mr. Jones, and pointing to his brother.

In silence Phil dived down his own little fat neck, and produced a tiny bag of pale blue silk, neatly stitched, and attached to a blue silk cord.

"He—he be's in there," said Phil, "nice and com'fy."

"Mabel made the bag for it," added Jim. Mr. Jones had been longing to know if Miss Graham had arrived; he had caught himself giving more than one curious glance round the room, and then checked himself, as though caught out in a meanness.

What right had he to be curious about a person he had never seen—except in a picture? Might he not well be content and at peace, with pretty Phil on his knee, and every one about him so full of gratitude, and kindness; making more, indeed, of last night's adventure than was called for?

Phil insisted upon taking a peep at the "yellow boy" before the blue bag that sister Mabel had made was consigned to the bosom of the embroidered frock once more, and Jim took a look at it, too; but with less envy than might have been expected, considering his ineffectual petition of the night before.

This cheerful and collected frame of mind on his part was, however, presently explained, by the appearance of the silver disc of a dollar displayed just above the trouser-pocket of his sailor-suit.

"I've got some money, too, I have," he said, with a slight toss of defiance at Mr. Jones. "Captain Rowan gave it to me this morning for telling him Mabel was coming home—"

"Give'd it us dis mornin' cos' we tole him," began Algie, who had listened to his brother with the deepest interest, and wished to put in his little Amen; but, happily perhaps for all parties—more especially for Charley Rowan—the joint narrative was abruptly broken off in the middle, by the scuffle of horses' feet on the white, dusty roadway, and the precipitate flight of Jim, Algie, and Master Phil to the half-open parlour.

It was His Excellency the governor's youngest daughter—a maiden fair to see—who sat her grey pony with delightful ease and grace, and showed a smiling, *débonnaire* face under the shadow of her broad-brimmed sombrero. The military secretary towered on a mighty roan beside her, and, at a respectful distance, a well-mounted

groom reined in a restive bay, that pawed the hard ground impatiently to Jim's high delight.

Major and Mrs. Clutterbuck were on the door-step in a trice, the former bowing and beaming with his most expansive geniality. The military secretary, who was in mufti, "boo'd foo' low" like the Laird o' Cockpen, and doffed his hat, while Miss Ermytrude Oglevie bent from her saddle to tell Phil's mother how pleased they were, and how glad they were, that that graceless young person was all safe and sound, instead of being dashed into a thousand atoms.

"How frightened you must have been!" cried the bright-eyed girl, who was as free from affectation or assumption of any kind as Mabel herself, and whose sweet Irish eyes showed a sheen as of unshed tears, as she spoke of King Baby's danger; "and how clever of that Mr.—Mr.—"

"Jones," said Mrs. Clutterbuck, as Miss Oglevie hesitated.

"How clever of him to get the naughty darling to come down like that! It made mamma cry, it did, indeed, when they told her about it."

The military secretary muttered something into his moustache; he was, perhaps, hardly as keenly interested in Master Phil as the rest, besides being supposed to be under the blight of a recent disappointment in love; but he meant to be sympathetic, all the same.

Miss Ermytrude would not dismount, as she had to hurry home for some function or other; but she lingered awhile, and presently two or three men, coming up from the steps, joined the group, and the great event of the day was still under discussion, when, suddenly, Jim, burrowing through those in front, appeared close by the grey pony's saddle-flap.

Jim looked earnestly upwards at the laughing face under the shady hat; he planted his legs on a firm basis, a glad light dawning in his eyes as he realised who the lady was.

"Did you come to see Phil?" he said, in his clear, piping voice. "Every one is glad about Phil, you know."

Miss Oglevie bent low from her saddle.

"Yes, my dear," she said, "I came to tell you all how glad we are about little Phil."

The Honourable Bob—a great favourite, be it said, with the Palace people—had gone quietly out into the strip of shade in which the group round the grey pony

was gathered, shaken hands with the fair Ermyntrude, and now, scenting mischief, kept his eye-glass well on Jim.

The mischief exceeded his wildest fears.

"Is old Bogle——" began Jim, in his high treble.

And then, somehow, the boy was swept aside, and found himself on the outskirts of the group, while the Honourable Bob, with his hand on the grey pony's bridle, was explaining to its rider that he feared that interesting animal had a stone in its off front hoof. He then raised the said hoof adroitly in his hand, apparently manipulated the offending stone, and received Miss Oglevie's thanks with his usual calm grace. Meanwhile, Jim, like a football skilfully dribbled along a field, found himself whisked into the house by one person, and shaken when there by another person, and finally deposited in the Major's "little den," feeling cruelly ill-used, and decidedly suppressed in his endeavours after plenty of "scope."

Nobody missed him, as it happened, for public attention became entirely concentrated upon King Baby, who was carried out by the Major himself to do homage to Miss Ermyntrude. Very bravely looked he in all the grandeur of his white dress, with the big blue butterfly behind. Not the least flurried, either, was Phil at finding himself the centre of attention—not he! Kings, you know, are used to that sort of thing.

"Oh, you darling!" cried Miss Oglevie. "Please, Mr. Dacre, hold Rob Roy steady, while Major Clutterbuck puts him on the front of my saddle. There"—as Phil was hoisted to that proud eminence—"now, tell me what made you go and walk on the roof like that?"

"Wanted to," said King Baby, with calm dignity.

Was not the royal will reason enough? They laughed and were very merry out there in the warm, balmy air by the purple sea. Even the military secretary condescended to smile at Master Phil.

Meanwhile, inside, in the shady rooms, of which the furthest one led into the side-garden with its fountain and oleander-tree in the centre of a small flagged court, Mr. Jones was going through the most stupendous experiences—experiences which were to leave their mark upon each day, nay, each hour of his life to come.

Sir Peyton Paling had constituted him-

self a sort of volunteer guard over Master Jim, hedging that rampant young person in one corner by an ingenious arrangement of legs and a chair; beyond this was a sort of patrol, composed of Captain Rowan and Vernon Halkett. Escape was hopeless, as Jim quickly saw, resigning himself to fate, and, at the same time, relieving his mind by making the most derisive grimaces at Algie, who hung about the captive faithful as Blondel of old.

"Gad! that boy is capable of anything," said Sir Peyton, lighting a cigarette—smoking was permitted in the little den—"I shouldn't be one b-b-bit surprised to hear him tell Miss Ermyntrude that I call the Governor Old Boggles."

"So you do," said Jim, who had listened to the Baronet's speech with undisguised joy.

"What will your sister Mabel say when she hears how you have been behaving?" said Charley Rowan, and, behold the evil spirit was quenched in Jim.

Captain Rowan had touched the raw—the victim winced.

"I won't say it again. . . . I'm sorry . . . let me out, Sir Peyton. . . . I want to see the pretty lady. . . ."

"Jim be's solly," chanted Algie, getting ready to shed a few tears, if needs be.

"Young crocodile," said the Baronet, munching his moustache.

"But I am sorry," persisted Jim; "and please don't tell Mabel."

Then she came in.

This may seem a bald way of announcing Miss Graham's entrance, and introducing her to the pages of our story; but it is the simple and unadorned manner in which the event—like to which there was none other before or since—pictured itself to the mind of Amphlett Jones then and for ever afterwards. There are things that need no dressing up: sublime in their grandeur and their beauty, simplicity best becomes them.

Mabel Graham came not only into the room, but into a man's life; and the moment was too supreme to need other than that plain, unvarnished statement.

The tattie that hung over a door—not hitherto noticed by Mr. Jones—was put gently aside, and the face of the picture upon the easel—the face that he had seen limned upon the bright haze of the moonlight, and before the darkness when he closed his eyes—looked in upon him.

Of course Miss Graham looked in upon the rest of the company too; but that was

a matter of no account at all. There appeared to be no one else in the world save herself and himself at that moment; nor am I sure there ever was—in a certain sense—for Mr. Jones any more. As the tattie fell behind her, he saw her full figure, rather above the middle height, slender, yet rounded and womanly in its curves, clothed in something soft and smoke-coloured—like a summer cloud, he thought—and girt about the pliant waist with a belt of wrought silver. Her hair, soft and feathery, fell low towards her darkly-pencilled brows, and her eyes—those wonderful eyes that were pure as a child's, yet sad as those of a woman who has lived, and loved, and lost, and wept—looked straight into his; yes, gave but scant heed to the young warriors in their picturesque undress uniforms, they who rose so promptly to their feet, who looked all a-light, as it were, at sight of her—paid no heed to them at all, but came across to him—Amphlett Jones—piloted by Bertie, held, indeed, by one slim hand, but by one only, so that the other was free to be laid in that of the stranger.

"This is Mr. Jones," said Bertie, taking the direct method of introduction; then he added, with simple confidence in the interest the visitor would take in the announcement, "Mabel has come back, you see, and she is so glad Phil did not fall down and break himself all up."

"Indeed I am," said Mabel, a quiver about her lips as she spoke. "I am so glad to meet you—to see you. I wish I quite knew what to say to thank you as I long to do."

"Say nothing," said Mr. Jones, "I am more than repaid already for what I did."

Then she turned to Captain Rowan, greeting him, as Mr. Jones thought, a little coldly.

At all events, he was very sure he would rather have the greeting she had given to him, even though it were only for Phil's dear sake. It was pleasant to shine, even if the light with which you shone were only a reflected one. It was also agreeable—and this pleasure had an element of surprise in it—to Amphlett Jones, to feel himself—in a way—a social success. To a man whose whole life had been spent in hard, unceasing application to business, this sensation had a freshness and charm that was indescribable. A bird, long caged, suddenly finding itself free, and

rising on rapid wings towards a sun-bright sky, might feel in something the same way.

"My dear sir," cried the Major, entering the shaded room like a sunbeam, "you are indeed the hero of the hour. Miss Ermyntrude would not let me bring you out to be presented to her; but she expressed a hope you would put your name on the Governor's book; and I shall be charmed to be your cicerone to the Palace. Shall we say to-morrow? That's well. I'll call for you in the Strada Reale, and then, our errand accomplished, you will return here with me, take 'pot luck,' as they say, and spend a quiet evening—eh?"

It seemed as if a sort of cloud of silence suddenly brooded over the room. Mabel assuredly gave no sign of having heard what her father said; she never lifted her sweet eyes to Mr. Jones once, but, with Phil cuddled up upon her knee, sat silent and thoughtful by the window, watching the sea.

Then came the sound of rapidly-approaching wheels, and Jim, who had hung himself over the window-ledge, cried out:

"Here's Mrs. Musters. Oh, bother!"

At which he was promptly suppressed by the united efforts of everybody.

When doors and windows stand agape, voices—especially shrill, young voices—are apt to carry unpleasantly.

Mrs. Musters was a person of most suspicious mind. She scented fancy slights as a terrier scents imaginary rats—trying her best to run them to earth, and making her spouse unspeakably miserable in the process.

Mrs. Musters had come to see what she could see, and hear what she could hear. Her husband had driven her over from Floriana in their remarkably neatly-appointed park phaeton, and—as theirs was a case in which the wife was always sure of a welcome for the sake of her "better half"—Major and Mrs. Clutterbuck made them most kindly welcome; indeed, as Dr. Musters tossed the reins to the smart groom, the Major was on the step, wreathed in his best smiles.

Phil, standing between Vernon Halkett's knees, no sooner caught sight of the somewhat rugged, but most kindly face of Dr. Musters, than he trotted across the room.

"My 'nother docky!" he cried, holding up his little arms; and his "other doctor" caught him, and swung him high in air.

"What have you been doing, my young shaver," he said; "making a squirrel of yourself, and frightening every one out of their wits? It's a mercy I hadn't to come and glue all the bits of you together, Master Phil."

"I'm dood now," said Master Phil, as his friend set him on his legs again; and over the golden head the doctor's kind grey eyes met Mrs. Clutterbuck's, and said all that was needful without a word.

The Major's wife had few friends in the world whom she valued more highly than the Surgeon-Major of the 193rd, as, indeed, she had good reason to value him, for ill would have rested the head of Mrs. Musters on her pillow had she suspected even the half of what her spouse could have told her of the Major's household. She often said—not without bitterness—that "Jeff was as close as wax," but there is every reason to believe the good woman never for one moment realised how close he was; and how thoroughly he realised—loving his homely wife very really and sincerely all the time—that she was not just the woman for a man to give confidences to. Ten years ago the hair had begun to thin on the doctor's crown; now it was a mere web, brought from the sides with some ingenuity, to cover deficiencies, and the time might be near at hand when he would have to take his promotion and leave the dear old 193rd; but, in all his career, it may safely be said, he had never told his Amelia anything that might not have been safely proclaimed from the house-tops, and no one a bit the worse for the ceremony.

Almost immediately on the heels of these two, arrived Mrs. Lindsay, the senior Major's wife, and little Mrs. Carbonel, bright-eyed and dainty as some tropical bird, and, for once in a way, without her Fred, that dazzling individual being absent "on urgent private business" in England.

Indeed, King Baby was holding quite a royal reception, Mr. Jones—to whom every one was especially cordial and polite—sharing the honours with him. Tea was set on a round table under the oleander-tree in the little court, and there Mabel

poured it out in dear little handleless cups, waited on by Captain Rowan, Dr. Halkett, the Honourable Bob, and the elegant Ginger.

It was all like a dream to Amphlett Jones.

The ripple of laughter; the happy chit-chat of people all interested in the same topics; the shaded rooms; the glimpse of the court with its solitary tree, laden with pink, wax-like blossoms; the graceful figure in the cloud-coloured dress, the supple waist girt by the silver belt, the deft, white hands so busy among the tea-cups, the soft brown eyes looking here and there to be sure no guest was overlooked.

How new it all was to him; how infinitely charming! How difficult it would be to give Dodson any real notion of what it was like!

Of course he should try; but he felt the effort would be a lame one; and Dodson would go down to the grave with his eyes unenlightened as to what the true state of the case had been. Mr. Jones could not help thinking to himself how happy they all seemed, more especially the Major. They all enjoyed their tea so much too. It struck Mr. Jones as being rather an unsubstantial meal; but it was evidently the right thing, and nothing more expected.

He thought the young fellows, in loose white linen tunics, and dark forage-caps, were having a fine time of it out there, flitting about Miss Mabel like butterflies about a flower, and handing the cups as she filled them to the Honourable Bob, who was here, there, and everywhere, and quite the life and spirit of the party. She was very like the picture—only more beautiful—or, rather, the picture was very like her, only not beautiful enough. The tree with the sweet pale blossoms seemed quite the right sort of thing to wave above her head. The open glass doors with creepers on either side and hanging from above, made a frame for the picture beyond—a picture far prettier, and more bewildering than the one upon the easel, since in this was light and life and colour.

From all of which things it will be understood that Jones of Seething Lane was going at a pace that would have made Dodson's hair stand on end.

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